



# GROUNDCOVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

JUNE 2019 VOLUME 10 ISSUE 6

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\$2

## Groundcover's new managing director; fighting the good fights



by Jim McBee  
Managing Editor

Good news! Groundcover has hired a managing director. Michelle DeFrancesco will run our office and manage vendors and volunteers. She's a clinical social worker with a master of social work degree from EMU and experience managing property for Avalon Housing.

Chemical dependency, mental health, trauma and homelessness all walk hand-in-hand. You're not going to fix one without addressing the others. Michelle's a lifelong Ann Arbor and Ypsi resident who's on top of that knot of problems, and I think she's going to be an amazing advocate for the homeless and for Groundcover.

...

As you know, Susan Beckett, who planted and grew the seedling of Groundcover, is easing out of her responsibility

ties as publisher. I'm taking over one of those tasks, managing the production of the paper.

On Feb. 21, at her invitation I conducted a workshop for vendors who write for Groundcover. The first thing I told the participants was that I felt a raging case of impostor syndrome, that doubt some of us feel about our accomplishments and the fear of being exposed as a fraud. Who was I, a middle-aged white guy who's never been truly desperate, to tell them what to write or how to write it?

I feel it again as I compose this getting-to-know-you editorial. Who am I, a middle-aged white guy who's never been truly desperate, to edit the voice of Washtenaw County's homeless?

This is where I'm coming from:

My background is not in advocacy, but in small-to-midsize newspapers – and *The Ann* magazine, which published in Washtenaw County from 2010 to 2017. In case you haven't heard, the news biz is getting beaten up pretty badly these

days. Ad sales and circulation are in the toilet. The president of the United States regularly calls journalists "the enemy of the people." A lot of folks get their "news" from flacks, conspiracy theorists and comedians.

If you've lived here for several years, you've seen *The Ann Arbor News* shrink and the Detroit papers pull back coverage. There are many journalistic holes to fill. Kind of like our roads, but worse.

Can we provide a voice for the homeless and pursue principled journalism at the same time? I think so. The rebound from the Great Recession has left a lot of folks behind, people who deserve coverage as much as the winners.

And the next recession is coming. Washtenaw County's going to need solid, local journalism and – unfortunately but predictably – Groundcover will have a lot more vendors who need a quality product to sell.

Ann Arbor has a politically progressive reputation (or we're a nest of communists, depending on whom you ask).

But when it comes to building much-needed housing – especially affordable housing – hmm, we're not always so liberal. Even though I come from a long line of newsrooms that knelt before the altar of objectivity, I confess it's nice not to have to pretend not to have opinions about inequity – about building a community that welcomes everyone, not just the "leaders and best" – or whoever can afford a half-million-dollar house.

Are we about progressive values or property values? That's the question of our moment.

Fortunately, Groundcover isn't alone in keeping the guttering flame of journalism alive so we can ask questions like this. In this issue, we share a piece on Ypsi's housing crunch originally published by Concentrate Ann Arbor, one of several news organs that sprang up locally as mainstream newspapers withered. Some of us are starting to band together, to learn to cooperate rather than compete.

I hope you'll band together with us and help us grow Susan's planting.

## Children need their parents; we need to do our part



by Susan Beckett  
Publisher,  
Groundcover  
News

At this time of year when we celebrate and honor mothers and fathers, I keenly feel the loss of my own parents who – like most kids – I failed to fully appreciate while they were here. Now that I see what an instrumental role parents play in the continuing health and success of their offspring, I am more committed than ever to seeing as many children as possible raised by loving parents.

In some cases, that does not happen naturally and the parents and children need support to bond and thrive. Counseling and mentoring programs for parents and children of all ages are available in our area. **Nurturing Families Washtenaw** supports at-risk families with infants and toddlers using the Nurturing Parenting curriculum. **Families First** provides crisis intervention to those identified by Child Protective Services. Both are programs of Catholic Social Services.

The **SOS Parents as Teachers program** and the **Early Headstart Home Visiting/Parent Support program** feature in-home visits that build parental resilience and competence using the Parents as Teachers curriculum. Engaging parents in their children's schoolwork and health is part of the Headstart curriculum.

**Ozone House**, which was once known only for housing runaway teens, now specializes in family reunification services. Only in rare cases are teens unable to reconcile.

Sometimes, it is the tragic premature death or disability of parents that disturbs the family. An entire generation of children in parts of Africa were torn from their parents by HIV/AIDS and its twin terror tuberculosis at the turn of the century. Then, under the leadership of President Bush, the United States intervened with PEPFAR, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and led in funding the **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria**, a worldwide coalition that has treated 18 million people in 2017 alone, affording the current generation of children the protection and support of their parents.

Every three years the Global Fund gathers funding pledges from participating countries. Other donor countries match U.S. contributions two-to-one, and recipient countries more than match what they receive with their own allocations to their internal health initiatives. The Global Fund works to build each country's health infrastructure and political will to meet its people's needs.

Once the most AIDS-devastated country, South Africa now independently provides 100 percent of the antiretroviral treatments for its people. And once people are effectively treated, their viral load becomes so low that it is extremely unlikely that they will infect others.

The group most at risk now are young women, with 7,500 becoming newly infected worldwide each day. Over 1,500,000 young people are reached each year with prevention programs but they and treatment programs need to adapt for young women. Clinics have typically been open weekdays from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., which effectively excludes those who work or attend school. Innovations to remove social

barriers to testing and treatment have been devised but need to be deployed.

The next pledging conference is this fall and it will largely be up to Congress to signal our intent to make a pledge that will meet the need. That provides impetus for other countries to do the same. The House of Representatives is off to a good start with an initial mark of \$1.56 billion over three years. If the Senate follows suit, the world will know that the United States is again prepared to help the most vulnerable children grow up with their families.

### Family resources

**Nurturing Families Washtenaw** – call 734-971-9781, ext. 331

**Families First** – call 517-782-4889

**SOS Parents as Teachers** – call 734-484-9944

**Early Headstart** – visit [www.washtenawpreschool.org](http://www.washtenawpreschool.org). If you do not have Internet access or need help completing the form, call 1-800-777-2861

**Ozone House Counseling program** – 734-662-2222 or TEXT "Ozone" to 734-662-2222 M-TH 10am-7pm and Friday 10am-4pm

by Christopher Ellis  
Groundcover Contributor

## Lost Dog

The picture on  
the tree  
a sentiment  
human  
akin  
Some are adrift  
are all  
Is the whole wide world  
In this  
Population denser and filled  
and no place unclaimed  
Is lostness  
real  
Where is that dog  
but we are all  
here.

## GROUNDCOVER MISSION:

Creating opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

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## LETTER to the EDITOR

### Darrell Banks deserved better from Groundcover

While members of the homeless community are connected to one another, they are often separated from family and friends and their memorial services often do not reflect what they have given to their new community of neighbors.

Rarely do mainstream reports recognize the manner in which we lived or the struggles we overcame while homeless. That is why I was disappointed when my publisher Susan Beckett failed to acknowledge the passing of a vendor other than to mention him in a tribute to another member of the community.

The tribute to the longtime leader Ron Gregg revealed where the backbone of the newspaper derived. It offered insight into an individual who gave more than words but offered financial support so that this city could share in the street-paper concept which began over three decades ago.

This paper has given the opportunity to improve and give credit to those in the homeless community in life and in death. This is why I felt so let down by the brevity of the article of a former vendor who passed.

The one paragraph dedicated to him also gave way to the class division that

threatens to separate our humanity. The designation of low-income felt like an unnecessary detail that without further explanation left out a significant part of who this man was and what he meant to the community.

Darrell Banks was much more than a low-income person. Like many, his financial status did not prevent him from having a richness of spirit. It did not prevent him from bringing joy to those who knew him. He offered years of companionship to his girlfriend, who is left to mourn him.

Like too many, he succumbed to his battle with drugs but, in spite of this, his character and respect for others shone through.

When members of the homeless community pass, the mainstream media does little to recognize their contributions. Many communities have set up separate memorials for those of the homeless community to pay tribute on December 21 of every year.

While Darrell did not receive the memorial I felt was fitting for the person he was, perhaps members in the Ann Arbor community will join forces to bring the event to Ann Arbor in order to offer him and other members of our homeless community fitting memorials.

While I will always remain grateful that Ms. Beckett is a wonderfully talented editor and has opened up immeasurable opportunities for those who fight homelessness, her perspective on this and other matters is often different from mine.

So, I write this letter to the editor not to criticize Ms. Beckett for her work, but more to bring focus to a fellow vendor. I write it knowing that Ms. Beckett is a fair, principled journalist who understands that opinions matter.

I write it to remind the world that homeless individuals matter in life and in death.

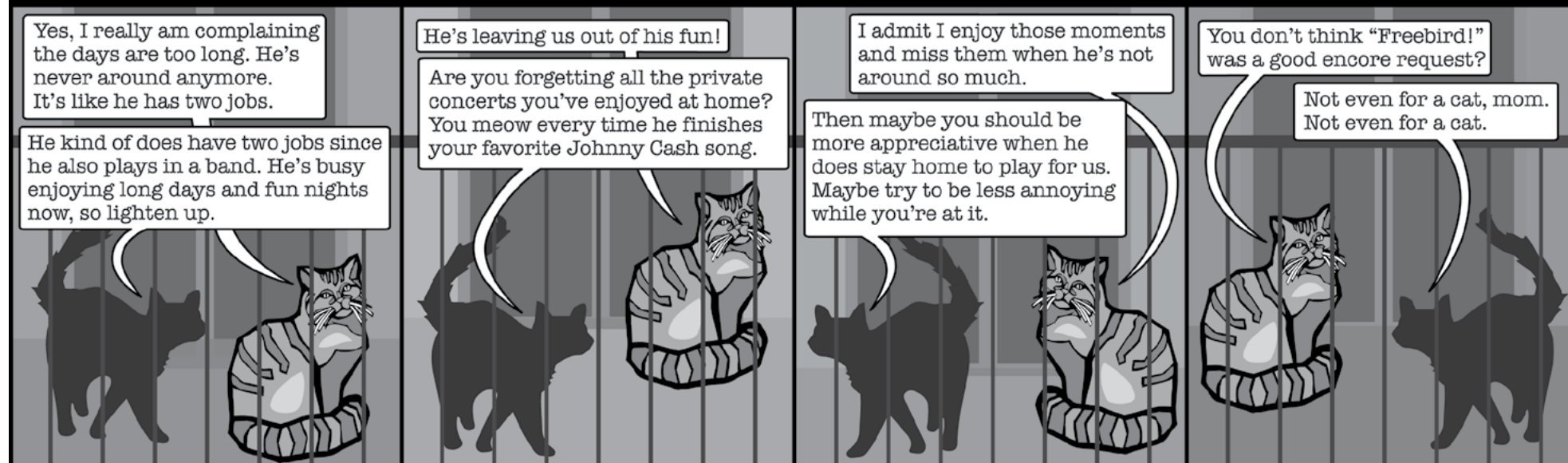
Elizabeth "Lit" Kurtz  
Groundcover Vendor #159

### Publisher's response

I share your disappointment, Lit. Another vendor-writer signed up to write a tribute to Darrell as part of a piece on opioid addiction. Unfortunately, it is taking longer to write than he anticipated.

Susan Beckett

### Strange (but Mostly True) Stories About a Mother and her Daughter • Cy Kloné © 2019



## Ypsilanti forum: A2's rising housing prices have spread east

*Editor's note: Concentrate A2 has kindly allowed us to reprint this story from early May. I attended the forum and was struck by how quickly Ann Arbor's housing crisis has spread to Ypsilanti. According to a 2015 housing analysis for the Office of Community and Economic Development, Ypsilanti's problem was property values too low to provide tax revenues for the city. As early as 2016, planners said, they were seeing rising rents that burden residents who don't have anywhere cheaper to go.*

— Jim McBee

## concentrate

by Sarah Rigg  
Concentrate A2

The city of Ypsilanti's current master plan says, "Anyone of any age or income can find a place to live in Ypsilanti."

"That didn't seem radical at the time, but today, it's something that's very much in threat of not being true," said Heidi Jugenitz, a member of the city's Housing Affordability and Access Committee, during a housing forum the committee hosted May 2 at Riverside Arts Center's Off Center.

The committee shared data from a recent study\* it conducted on housing in the Ypsi area. The committee surveyed about 600 residents, focusing on city residents but including residents of Ypsilanti and Superior townships. The committee also interviewed local landlords.

Committee member Desirae Simmons noted that the survey was not scientific, and that certain groups are under- or over-represented. For instance, about 26 percent of Ypsi residents are between the ages of 18 and 24, but only about 15 percent of respondents were in that age bracket. Similarly, about 30 percent of city residents are black, but only about 14 percent of respondents were black.

The survey found that about half of households surveyed, including both homeowners and renters, are "cost-burdened" – they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing-related costs, including insurance and utilities. About 27 percent of owner-occupied households are cost-burdened, while 59 percent of renter-occupied households are cost-burdened.

Accessibility is another important issue as Washtenaw County's senior popula-

tion is expected to grow over the next 20 years. Committee members said 90 percent of Ypsi's housing stock was built before 1990, the year the Americans with Disabilities Act was established.

When asked which of a series of accessibility features their home has, with options ranging from ramps to wider doors and floor-level tub and shower entry, 62 percent responded with "none of the above."

Committee members talked briefly about affordability strategies and solutions that have been explored in other communities. Those included regulatory and legal changes, advising renters of their rights, and establishing a community land trust – see sidebar.

The forum ended with questions and feedback from about 40 community members who attended the housing forum. Questions ranged from how historic district regulations interact with accessibility issues to how caught up the city is on rental unit inspections.

One audience member suggested that Ypsi look into an intergenerational housing model used in some places in Europe. Instead of segregating students in one area and seniors in another, for instance, the intergenerational model would have seniors and college students living side by side, sharing skills and talents.

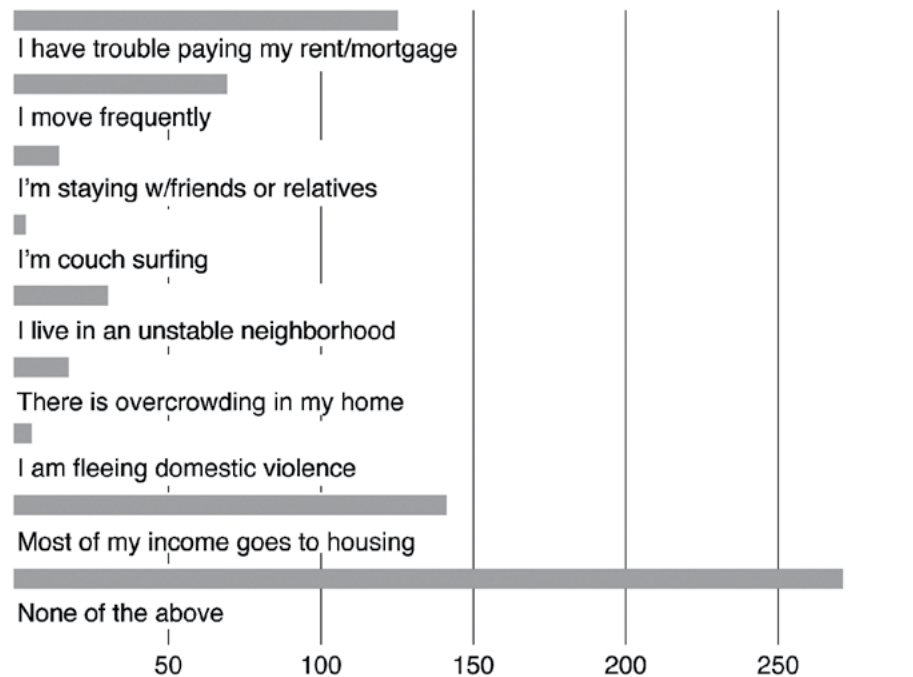
\* The slideshow used at the housing forum and the survey data are on the committee's webpage: <https://cityofypsilanti.com/672/Master-Plan-Housing-Affordability-Access>.

*Sarah Rigg is a freelance writer and editor in Ypsilanti Township and the project manager of On the Ground Ypsilanti. She has served as innovation and jobs/development news writer for Concentrate since early 2017 and is an occasional contributor to Driven. You may reach her at sarahrigg1@gmail.com.*

## Ypsilantians at risk

In an unscientific survey of 530 respondents, many Ypsilanti residents indicated they live in precarious circumstances.

Do any of the following describe your current or most recent housing situation? (Select all that apply.)



Groundcover graphic | Source: City of Ypsilanti

## What to do about Ypsi's housing crisis

Ypsilanti's Housing Affordability & Access Committee listed a number of proposals to address housing costs. Here are some:

## Regulatory fixes/renter rights

- Tenant right of first refusal
- Build better public awareness around current renter protections and services
- Source of income protections
- Non-discrimination ordinance

## Public lands

- Use public lands available within the city to develop affordable housing units, including Water Street and 220 N. Park
- Partnering with nonprofits
- Affordable live-work spaces for creatives/artists

## Zoning and land use

- Ease restrictions on tiny houses and accessory dwelling units
- Expand the number of nonrelated persons allowed to reside in a single dwelling
- Prioritize public participation and equity when updating the zoning code

## Universal design/visitability

- Universal Design is a strategy for making environments (including homes) welcoming and usable to the most diverse

range of people possible. Its key principles are simplicity, flexibility and efficiency

- Incentivize or require features such as no-step entrances, 36-inch doorways and main-floor bathrooms

## Need-based assistance

- Explore, promote, and expand down-payment assistance programs
- Home rehabilitation for accessibility
- Energy efficiency and weatherization
- Expand supportive housing and emergency shelters

## Community land trust

- Community land trusts are membership-based nonprofits that acquire and/or develop land and sell the structures on the land to maintain permanent affordable housing and prevent displacement in appreciating markets

## Supporting other communities' efforts

- Advocating for Ann Arbor and other communities to increase affordable housing options could relieve price pressures in Ypsilanti
- Collaboration with Washtenaw Urban County, One Community Racial Equity initiative, Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

Source: City of Ypsilanti

## 10 for \$10

## Exploring Washtenaw County on the cheap

by Groundcover staff

Looking for something to do that won't break the bank? Hoping to try something new? Wanting a little something sweet or savory? **10 for \$10** is here to provide you with low-cost or free things to do in Washtenaw County.

**1. Bridging 23 Unity Walk: 8 a.m.-noon, June 1.** Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti are next to each other, but they can feel like different worlds. The Unity Walk started in 2018 to bridge the divide between the eastern and western halves of Washtenaw County. This year's walk goes from Ypsilanti District Library to the Ann Arbor Downtown African American Festival. **Free.**

**2. Ann Arbor African American Downtown Festival: 9 a.m.-8 p.m., June 1.** This annual event has been celebrating diversity for 24 years. Bring lawn chairs to enjoy live music

and free activities. E. Ann and Main streets and E. 4th Avenue and Huron Street behind the courthouse. **Free.**

**3. Treeverb Music Festival: June 1, 2:30-11 p.m.** Computer Games, JR JR, Tunde Olaniran, Anna Burch, Joshua Davis, Corey Harper, Jacob Sigman and The North41 will perform a **free** show at the First and Huron parking lot in downtown Ann Arbor. Joe Hertler and the Rainbow Seekers will play an after-party at The Blind Pig, 208 S. 1st St., Ann Arbor, with a \$10 advance cover.

**4. Native Plant Expo and Marketplace: 9 a.m.-2 p.m., June 1.** Most of our lawns, gardens and landscapes are populated with plants that had their origins far from Michigan. But the greenery that fits in best ecologically evolved right here. Farm Council Grounds, 5055 Ann Arbor-Saline Road. **Free.**

**5. A2 Tech Trek: 3-7 p.m., June 7.** Ann Arbor's tech sector has been growing and A2 Tech Trek, an annual opportunity for folks

to learn more about downtown's tech companies, has mushroomed in popularity. Register for **free** at **A2Tech360.com**.

**6. Ya'ssoo Greek Festival: 11 a.m.-midnight, June 7-8; noon-6 p.m., June 9.** Celebrate Greek culture at this annual festival of food, drink, music and dance at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, 3109 Scio Church Road, Ann Arbor. Admittance is \$3 after 4 p.m., June 7, or after 1 p.m., June 8; free on June 9. Children 12 and under free.

**7. Ann Arbor Summer Festival: June 14-July 7.** The annual town-and-gown festival on U-M's campus puts on an array of ticketed indoor and free outdoor entertainment too vast and varied to list here. Top of the Park's **free** shows start at 5 p.m. each day. Get the schedule at **annarborsummerfestival.org**.

**8. Free Role-Playing Game Day: 12-5:30 p.m., June 15.** Are you a budding adventurer or a grizzled campaigner? Vault of Midnight will give out quick-start rules and

adventure modules while supplies last. Or register now (**bit.ly/2Q95FTZ** – \$5) to play in one of several campaigns starting at noon or 3 p.m. 219 S. Main St., Ann Arbor

**9. Engage Over Coffee: 8:30-10 a.m., June 19.** This monthly event caters to people who don't love networking. Argus Farm Stop, 325 W. Liberty Road, Ann Arbor. **Free** for newcomers (or donate what you can) via **bit.ly/2HptHpR**.

**10. Ann Arbor Skatepark Light Up the Park: 11 a.m.-4 p.m., June 23.** Celebrate the Skatepark's fifth birthday at Veterans Memorial Park with top athletes in skateboarding, music, vendors, competitions. Food will be available to buy. **Free.**

*Want to contribute to 10 for \$10? Please send ideas for inexpensive treasures and experiences in and around our vibrant community to: [submissions@groundcovernews.com](mailto:submissions@groundcovernews.com)*

## Poor People's Campaign arrestees exonerated in 'interest of justice'

by Laurie Wechter  
Groundcover Contributor

On May 9, the Michigan Poor People's Campaign learned that all charges had been dismissed against 13 defendants in Lansing's District Court 54-A "in the interest of justice."

The Poor People's Campaign members were arrested at June 2018's protest against the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality in Lansing. I was arrested with 17 others at the Department of Health and Human Services, pled no contest and had to pay a \$300 fine.

Activists were protesting the state's role in the Flint Water Crisis and its support for Enbridge Line 5, an oil pipeline they say threatens the Great Lakes, and other inequities.

It is a remarkable outcome from the PPC's 40 Days of Action, in which 30

residents were arrested in Lansing in direct action activities that included surrounding the MDEQ building in crime tape for the agency's role in public health and environmental harms.

Lawyers for the protesters submitted a "necessity defense" that, lead attorney Julie Hurwitz said, "presented the legal/factual basis for the defense with a comprehensive Memo of Law and exhibits to support a jury's finding of imminent harm caused by the MDEQ."

The dismissal of charges also means that the necessity defense brief, presented by NLG to District Court Judge Alderman, is now a public record.

The record includes a statement by the judge that this is a serious case presenting substantial issues.

While the Michigan PPC defendants won't present their case to a jury of their peers, this legal precedent is a victory for justice.



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## Youth art group brightens Ypsi's Parkridge Community Center

by Audrey Carey  
Groundcover Intern

While visiting Ma Lou's, one of my favorite Ypsilanti fried chicken joints, I noticed some of the most intriguing black-and-white photographs I had ever seen, as well as the paint-can pinhole cameras that had been used to create them. The images appeared slightly ominous, something I believe to be inherent to pinhole photography, but each was partnered with a short quote that gave some insight into the thoughts and feelings of the artists who had created them. It turns out, the artists responsible for this exhibit were in a local youth program, Youth Arts Alliance.

Upon visiting YAA's most recent mural project at Ypsilanti's Parkridge Community Center, I was blown away by the creativity and emotional effect these young artists had to offer. This group was working on developing a large mural in the Parkridge Community Center. The mural depicts a large profile of a human head, much like the silhouette profile portraits many of us made in art class as young kids. This profile, however, was unusual in its size and in the underlying message that it carried.

Before beginning the mural, each participant was encouraged to come up



Ben Cohen and Yusuf Abdul Lateef of Radiant City Arts hang with Heather Martin of Youth Arts Alliance at the new mural painted by YAA participants at Parkridge Community Center in Ypsilanti. Photo: Youth Arts Alliance.

with their own silhouette portraits and fill them with Adinkra symbols – each of which represented something meaningful to its creator, such as reconciliation, endurance, wisdom or courage.

The participants were happy to share with me their creative process in coming up with the theme of the larger mural. One participant, who goes by Nando, strategically placed his symbols throughout his portrait, each one representing a specific emotion and strategi-

cally arranged to represent its location.

"When you have hope you feel it all over, so I put that symbol in my chest," Nando said.

Parkridge Community Center is meant to foster community ties, a goal this project supports. The next step will be to build a recording studio. Participants will be involved in the studio's implementation and in making recordings. The studio will be available for participants to follow their own creative process, and there are plans to use the space to foster cross-generational relationships by recording oral histories of the surrounding community.

Youth Arts Alliance offers a number of different creative workshops for partici-

pants to choose from. Participants can make and use pinhole cameras, create mosaic sculptures, get involved in horticultural arts and more. The youth are encouraged, and are often excited, to share their newly learned skills with loved ones.

It seems that much of what Youth Arts Alliance emphasizes is the importance of community. Not only is the art that participants create meant to feed the eyes, ears and souls of the greater society, but also the smaller YAA community. Even youth who disclosed hesitancy upon agreeing to participate expressed great appreciation and delight at the experience that the program had to offer them.

"I like to see other people's dreams come alive," said participant D. Mun.

### Youth Arts Alliance

**What:** A local, nonprofit organization that provides creative opportunities to youth who have come into contact with the juvenile justice system. YAA serves youth in Jackson, Monroe and Washtenaw counties through a variety of projects that foster creativity and enable youth to give back to the community.

**Who:** Heather Martin, director

**More info:**  
[youthartsalliance.com](http://youthartsalliance.com)

**Contact:** (616) 581-4738,  
[youth.arts.alliance@gmail.com](mailto:youth.arts.alliance@gmail.com)

## Interview: What makes a good film festival?

by Ashkan Kazemi  
Groundcover Contributor

In spite of the presence of critically acclaimed films, I didn't expect such a long line for the opening night of Cinetopia at Michigan Theater in Ann Arbor. The anticipation for southeast Michigan's big film fest was beyond belief. The main house in Michigan Theater was packed on May 10.

I spoke with the festival's co-director Ariel Wan, who is also the director of marketing and programming at Michigan Theater.

*This is the eighth Cinetopia. So how did it start? What's the story behind it?*

Yes, so it started in 2012 and the executive director of the Michigan Theater, his name is Russ Collins, and our chief development officer Lee Bury, they talked and as you know, at that time in 2012, there really weren't any film festivals in southeast Michigan. So, you know, Russ wanted to start a film festival in the Detroit area. Most major cities have their own film festival, like Cleveland has their Cleveland Film Festival. Indianapolis has their own film festival, but Detroit did not. And so we started in Ann Arbor, because we already have, you know, a solid member base who's used to seeing these types of films. So, it started in Ann Arbor. And then each year, it just grew and went to another venue and another venue. And then I think like, three years later, we were in Detroit venues. And now we're in Royal Oak and Bloomfield.

*What are your goals? Are you thinking of having a venue in each southeastern Michigan city?*

In terms of where we see the location for Cinetopia to be, they're building an Emagine theater in what is now the Ford company's building, but used to be the train station in Detroit. So, they're going to build a movie theater there. And so our hope is that that could be the hub, eventually, where we do all of our screenings just in one area. And we'll probably still maintain some type of presence here. And we can do like one or two special screenings with the partner venues that we're still working with, but it would be great if the main part of the festival was just one location.

Because we are located next to U-M but the film festival happens when U-M is not in class ... (a) good number of students leave. We do have a high school student film section, I believe it's called the Legacies Project. It's the students from Skyline that every single year their project is to create a short film about ... I think it's about seniors, about their legacy. Every single year, we also have a short film competition called Detroit Voices. And those are submission-based. So, we've been collecting short film submissions for a couple months. And we pick the finalists. And then we screen all of the short films created by the finalists. And then at the screening, we'll announce who the winners are and who the audience favorite is. And then afterwards, there's a cash prize for each winner. And then after that, there's a nice reception.

*You mentioned Cinetopia is happening when school's out of class. But every time I walked past Michigan Theater or State Theatre I saw a huge line. This is popular, right? Has it always been like this?*

In Ann Arbor, yes. I think it's more and more popular now, because we're doing it every year, and so people look forward to it. One new thing we're doing this year in our Ann Arbor screenings, that is new, and probably also helping our numbers, is that we partnered with the Jewish Film Festival. The Jewish Film Festival shows two films a day for five days and their groups come out to

see their films. What's really, really cool about having a partnership with them is that we've made it so that their pass holders can come see our movies, and our pass holders will see their movies. So, they're so excited because they said that they never sell out and we've been selling out every single film that's in the Jewish Film Festival this year.

see FILM FESTIVAL, page 11

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## Out of seeming chaos comes a new vision



by Kevin Spangler  
Groundcover  
Vendor #307

As I write this, I am at the stagecoach stop finishing writing this amazing gift to society, “Rising Out of Depression and Going Up the Royal Road.” At the shop, it seemed like chaos once I left. I always remember that when you raise your vibration the old vibration tries to keep you back. With my understanding, all of the issues are actually small because I know great things are happening. As my girl-friend Ariel and I finish our masterpiece, we learn more about each other and build a bond that is strong.

Great things are happening with Boober. I hired a professional bike

mechanic, Juan. We have been upgrading the mechanics on the bikes to make them infallible. We have upgraded the Bank of Ann Arbor trailer with new, heavy-duty rims. It took a long time to figure out the solution as we went through many options that failed, finally investing the money to upgrade the trailer wheels and rebuild all the axles. We still have two trailers in project mode. Soon, all our hard work will come to fruition. Plans for one of the trailers are to advertise our book until we get the most suitable advertiser.

As we finish this book, we are starting a Universal Connections Group – starting with our crew, then eventually moving to a space. We have a few spaces that we are looking at; one is on Packard, but it is not finished and we need to build our practice to be able to afford the \$2,500 a month for our healing space.

With all of the chaos, I didn’t want to fire anyone so I thought long and hard on a solution and the solution was to use the Royal Road program we have been conceptualizing. We held our first Royal Road meeting with our crew and it was awesome. The group therapy was very good at unifying. It put us all on the same wavelength and all of us focused on the same goals working together.

We started out getting everyone in a positive mind-state by asking them what positive words we want on our light cables. After that, we made a new values statement for Boober Tours. This is what we came up with:

*We are a team that represents class, respect and going above and beyond in our positive service to the community. We represent what is possible when we build our lives up from scratch, when we sincerely, authenti-*

*cally are giving from the heart and we see a new reality unfold. When we reflect positive energy into others we can inspire others by keeping our lives moving forward into the future and keeping ours minds on positive thoughts, by presenting ourselves in a positive way that attracts genuine attention. It feels great to inspire others by giving them an exciting experience of thrill and community connection.*

Our next step with this program is to work with one of my favorite local family-owned restaurants, Silvio’s Organic Pizzeria. Thank you again for all the generous donations from the Groundcover community.



## County celebrates 50th anniversary of N.Y.’s Stonewall Riot



by Will Shakespeare  
Groundcover  
Vendor #258

It was early morning on June 28, 1969, when the Stonewall Riots began in New York City.

Before the uprising, New York Police officers with warrants raided Stonewall Inn – a popular bar and a refuge for the LGBTQ community.

In the 1960s and earlier, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people were denied a sense of belonging and inclusion in most cities. They faced discrimination because of their sexual orientation. History.com describes what police did when they entered the gay club:

Armed with a warrant, police officers entered the club, roughed up patrons, and, finding bootlegged alcohol, arrested 13 people, including employees and people violating the state’s gender-appropriate clothing statute (female officers would take suspected cross-dressing patrons into the bathroom to check their sex).

For the LGBTQ community of New York, those humiliating incidents were the last straw. Residents of the Greenwich section of New York where the police raid happened joined angry patrons

of Stonewall Bar in a major protest. They refused to disperse. When a police officer hit a lesbian patron in the head while trying to force her into a police wagon, she shouted to the crowd, imploring them to act more aggressively, and to “throw pennies, bottles, cobblestones and other objects at the police.”

Within minutes, hundreds gathered at the scene. Some protesters threatened to set the building on fire. The fire department and the city’s riot squad intervened. They stopped the flames and rescued Stonewall patrons who were trapped inside. The protests and demonstrations continued for five more days and involved thousands of sympathizers, supporters and advocates. The goal was to stop constant police harassment, discrimination and marginalization.

However, LGBTQ mistreatment continued. The gay community was challenged in the 1980s and 1990s when the HIV/AIDS epidemic affected thousands of gay individuals in large urban cities such as New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Boston and Philadelphia. Finding a cure for the AIDS virus was the “clarion call” for many progressive liberals and some conservatives.

New drugs have been developed to give a fighting chance to people who are infected with HIV/AIDS. The ACT-UP militant gay-rights movement deserves credit for raising awareness, which in

turn led to a series of experimental drugs.

The 21st century has witnessed a turnaround in public attitude and behavior toward the LGBTQ community. Over a generation, this community achieved widespread social acceptance, recognition and legislative support. Even the Supreme Court moved beyond “civil union” to “marriage equality,” invoking the 14th Amendment’s due-process rights and the equal protection guarantees. With every election cycle at the federal, state and local levels, LGBTQ people have been gaining ground. There are now more than 20 openly gay or lesbian members of the U.S. House of Representatives and one senator from Arizona.

At the state level, more legislators are coming out of the closet. In Virginia, Danica Roem has become America’s first openly transgender state lawmaker. When she was elected, her GOP critics depicted her as a man and circulated a leaflet that claimed she would “teach ‘transgenderism’ to kindergartners,” according to *The Washington Post*.

At the local level, thousands of openly gay people serve as commissioners, City Council members and mayors. Washtenaw County Commissioners Katie Scott and Jason Morgan are lesbian and gay; they enjoy the full support of fellow commissioners.

Pete Buttigieg, the gay mayor of South Bend, Ind., is running for U.S. presi-

dent. He is considered a serious candidate who champions progressive causes. In a recent *New York Times* article, Buttigieg said “the beginning of a new American solidarity lies in the recognition of differences.”

The month of June is considered LGBTQ awareness, recognition, and pride month in Michigan. Ann Arbor and the County of Washtenaw clearly welcome the LGBTQ community. Former City Councilman Chris Kolb, who is gay, is now a member of the Michigan House of Representatives.

Ann Arbor’s history with the lesbian and gay movement of the 1970s started with the establishment of a Human Sexuality Office (now the Spectrum Center) at the University of Michigan in 1971 – the first such office on any American college campus. This gesture was followed by the “coming out of the closet” by some U-M students and local residents. Braun Circle in Kerrytown, near the farmers’ market, became the popular hangout for LGBTQ individuals. The first gay bar in Ann Arbor, \aut\ Bar, was in Braun Circle. It continues to be a safe place for the LGBTQ community.

This movement has come a long way. New York City plans to host WorldPride, the largest international LGBTQ celebration, this year on June 28. In Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County, the whole month of June will be a time for celebrating LGBTQ pride.

## Sudoku ★★☆☆☆ 4puz.com

2		6		8				
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5	4				1			6
1	5							2
	7						1	
3							6	4
9			8				3	7
			7		6	1		8
				1		9		5

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

## GROUNDCOVER VENDOR CODE

While Groundcover News is a non-profit organization that works with newspaper vendors who are considered contracted self-employers, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

- I agree not to ask for more than face value or solicit donations by any other means.

- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover News.

The following list is our Vendor Code of Conduct, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

**All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:**

Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$2, or the face value of the paper.

- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.

- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.

- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcover News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff and other vendors respectfully. I will not “hard sell,” threaten, harass or pres-

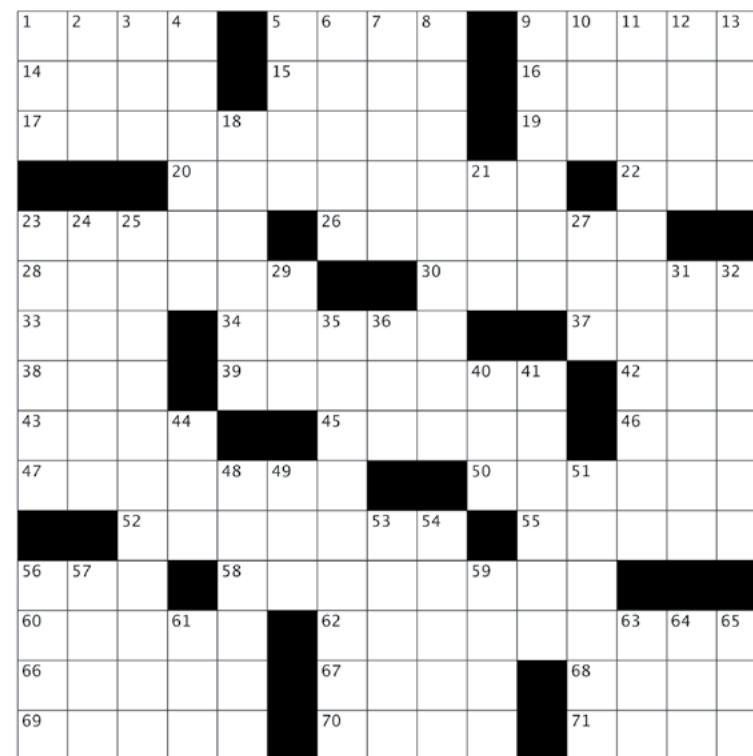
Shady Parts Peter A. Collins

### ACROSS

1. Crying spells
5. Piece of \_\_\_\_
9. More developed
14. Condition of someone spotted at the prom?
15. Movies, slangily
16. Draw out
17. Wireless networking protocol
19. Power
20. Swerve
22. Ger. neighbor
23. Easy bucket
26. Like always
28. Summer beverage
30. Most alluring
33. Caesar’s 1150
34. Nautical “Halt”
37. “Pygmalion” penner
38. “The \_\_\_\_ Club” (1970s–80s TV show)
39. Unrefined rube
42. Certain Minions have one
43. Biblical patriarch
45. “Yesterday” or “Tomorrow”
46. “The Fountainhead” author Rand
47. Old Lincoln luxury ride
50. Confidential matter
52. Oddsmakers
55. Bananas
56. GPS determination
58. Freddie Mercury’s birthplace
60. Swiss alternative
62. Buck
66. Something one might skip to?
67. Behind schedule
68. “Hairspray” role
69. Intelligence community technique, for short
70. River of France
71. Make an impression?

### DOWN

1. Critical remark



Peter A. Collins

2. Body part athletes often tear: Abbr.
3. Wildebeest
4. Deem appropriate
5. Corp. money handlers
6. Honolulu hello
7. St. \_\_\_\_ (Caribbean island)
8. Wrung out
9. Acid \_\_\_\_
10. Knot-tying phrase
11. Military decoration
12. Danish footwear brand
13. Spin
18. Tone deafness
21. Expert or treat add-on
23. “The Incredible Mr. \_\_\_\_”
24. Bank patron’s ID
25. Coward
27. “\_\_\_\_ for Alibi” (Sue Grafton novel)
29. “\_\_\_\_ Maria”
31. Agree
32. Jackson’s bill
35. With much love
36. Sketch comedy TV series since ‘75
40. Opposite of trans
41. Actor Wynn
44. \_\_\_\_-cone
48. Ingratiate oneself (to)
49. Letters on a rap sheet
51. Reined in
53. Pound and Cornell
54. Seven, in Seville
56. Dudley Doright’s grp.
57. Pole worker output?
59. Cold one
61. Unlikely noise from a fan?
63. Gator or lemon end
64. TV news network
65. Last half of a candy bar?

sure customers, staff or other vendors verbally or physically.

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**If you see any Groundcover News vendors not abiding by the code of conduct, please report the activity to: [contact@groundcovernews.com](mailto:contact@groundcovernews.com), 734-263-2098.**

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1/4	\$159.95	\$215.95	5 x 6.25
1/2	\$299.95	\$399.95	10.25 x 6.5 or 5 x 13
Full Page	\$495.95	\$669.95	10.25 x 13

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## Say ‘Happy Ramadan Mubarak’ to your Muslim neighbors

by Will Shakespeare

Ramadan is a holy month of fasting and prayer observed by more than a billion Muslims around the world. Islamic scholars say Ramadan is the holiest month of the year because it marks the period when the Prophet Mohammed received the holy Koran from the angel Gabriel. It is also described as a period “when the gates of heaven are open, the gates of hell are closed, and the devils are chained.” Some observers say that Ramadan “brings out a special feeling of emotional excitement and religious zeal among Muslims of all ages.”

The famous poet Rumi said that Ramadan is about fortitude: “Fortitude is as sweet as a sweet cloud. Wisdom rains from it because it was in such a month of fortitude that the Koran arrived.”

This year’s Ramadan started May 5 and will end June 3. Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam – duties that are obligatory for all members. The other pillars are a declaration of faith, daily prayers, charity and performing the hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca).

Ramadan is a 30-day celebration in which Muslims express gratitude to Allah for giving the first verses of the Koran to the Mohammed in the year 610. For more than 1400 years, there has been a Ramadan celebration among Muslims across the globe.

### Beginnings

Ramadan involves fasting from sunrise to sunset “to bring the faithful closer to God and to remind them of the suffering of those less fortunate.” It is a common practice for the Muslim community to feed the hungry and support charitable organizations. The “Fortitude of Ramadan” implies feelings of self-control, impulse control, self-restraint and deeper spirituality. People who observe Ramadan are asked to avoid eating, drinking and sex from dawn to dusk for 30 days.

Also, “Muslims should not engage in road rage, cursing, fighting or gossiping” during Ramadan.

Observant Muslims enjoy a pre-dawn meal, or “suhoor.” It is anticipated that the meal will satisfy their craving during the day. However, there are a few

exceptions to the fasting piece, including school-aged children, the elderly, pregnant women, nursing mothers, seriously ill patients and some international business travelers.

### Breaking the fast

Eid al Fitr is a festival of elaborate meals that follows Ramadan. This year, the feast will start at sunset on June 3. It could last up to three days. Most Muslims will follow the tradition and break their fast as Prophet Mohamed did: He took a sip of water and ate some dates before prayers. Delicious meals were served afterwards. The feast was called “Iftar,” which means “the meal shared with family and friends.” On the first day of breaking fast, the feast of “Shawwal” is ushered in. Elaborate dishes of all kinds of food are served in banquet style. Most people decorate their houses, and gifts are exchanged.

An important part of Eid al-Fitr is to express warm wishes to your neighbors and invite them to a meal. It is common for Muslims to celebrate Eid al-Fitr with poor children, customarily by offering one’s daily food ration or its equivalent in cash to the poor.

### In America

The way Ramadan is celebrated in Muslim-majority countries differs from the experience in the United States, Michigan and Washtenaw County. For example, in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, municipal rules limit the time when alcohol can be sold. People who eat in public may be fined or receive jail time. In the UAE, restaurants are urged to use large window curtains to conceal non-Muslims who eat during the day. In Saudi Arabia, restaurants close from dawn to dusk. In Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan and across America, businesses remain open.

When the America’s founders drafted the constitution in 1787, views on Islam were at the forefront of the agenda. The European positive review of Islam’s contribution during the Enlightenment influenced Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, who inserted the clause for religious liberty. John Adams’s book, “Thoughts on Government,” made positive reference to Mohammed. Ben Franklin’s autobiography said it was alright for Muslim

see RAMADAN, page 12

## Film festival

continued from page 7

*I’m trying to figure out the effect of this “local” film festival on the community. Why should people care? Why are people coming to Cinetopia?*

I did an intro and moderated a Q&A last night about a documentary of the revolution that’s happening in the Democratic Republic of Congo. And the person that I had come speak, is a U-M professor of theater, but he is Congolese and he’s from Kinshasa, which is where the documentary and where all the revolution is happening. As you know, it’s a lesser-known conflict. In our media, we know there’s something going on in Venezuela, we’ve heard of something happening in South Africa, but we don’t hear about the Congo. Being able to bring this documentary to Cinetopia and giving access to people to watch different stories from different places around the world ... that’s something that can only be done in a film festival. And it isn’t done, normally.

I was telling people that the majority of films that we’re showing are probably not going to get a wide distribution. I think there are three, maybe four films out of the 67 that we’re showing, that are going to probably come back to the movie theater in a couple months. ...

*How does the festival work? How do you get the films?*

Our film festival is different from most film festivals, because we curate the majority of the content, whereas most film festivals ... are submission-based. So, we seek out films. The process kind of starts when the Toronto Film Festival starts in the fall and we just keep an eye out for what films have been showing up at those film festivals. So, there’s always a few that won some type of award and we’ll try to get those films. There’s also a lot of films that are in smaller film festivals like a film festival in Missouri called True/False and it’s just documentaries.

*I heard that you made an effort to make room for LGBTQ films? What are some of the criteria you take into account in the curation process?*

The first criterion is that it has to be good ... like, well-made. If it’s a documentary, it’s an honest topic and honest portrayal, or an honest opinion. For example, for the film “Gaza,” we had an internal debate about including the film. A few of the programmers watched it, but they don’t know about the Palestinian and Israeli conflict. So, we had a few of our good members that are from Israel watch the film and give

us their opinion of it. We thought that as long as it’s not propaganda or inaccurate we should definitely show it.

Those are the ones that we needed to talk a little bit more about. But when we do our big list of films, we’re not like: “We need to show at least five LGBTQ films,” we don’t do it like that. We look at the films first. And then when we start thinking “do we have similar stories?” “Are there any themes?” and in the end we say: This is what we have, we still have two more slots of films. What are we missing? What kind of film theme? Or is there a female director, is it LGBTQ, is it about music, the documentary? Is it a narrative? What are we missing? And then we’ll try to find the last two pieces to fit into the puzzle.

*For the films I’ve been to, I saw that in the beginning, some of them said “this person made the screening of this film possible.” How do the finances work?*

Our festival cannot operate on just sales, like ticket sales. Sponsorship and fundraising are three-quarters of our budget. And that’s why we take specific care in our programming and making sure that there’s something for everyone, because everyone is making this festival happen. You know, the people who buy the tickets, see the film, that’s only a quarter of our budget. But it’s still very important. Without the quarter of the budget we wouldn’t be able to do a lot of things that we are doing.

*I actually did not get a chance to see your sneak preview film, “Welcome to Commie High.” How was that experience?*

I think over 700 people came to the screening. Most of them were either currently attending or their kids are attending Commie High. It was really great. It was a really great thing for the community, the people who really love and believe in Community High School. We screened a version of the film which the director called the “fine cut” since the final cut is not ready yet. So there were still a lot more work that he could do for the film. He was getting feedback from everyone that was there so he can improve the film so that he can do a final cut and then start submitting into festivals....

We did something like this last year. This filmmaker last year made a film about the water crisis that’s happening in Flint and Nevada and then the Keystone pipeline. It was called “Thirst for Justice” and it was a rough-cut screening last year and it was the same thing. She showed the film, and then she asked for feedback so she can start making improvements to it.

*Was there a reason you guys chose to do “Autonomy” for the closing night? Is that at Mcity?*

Actually, I found out about this film from a newspaper article. And it was only mentioned there, it wasn’t even about it. So, I looked it up. And I saw that it was playing at SXSW about autonomous vehicles. I know about this because my husband is an autonomous-controls engineer and I’ve been to Mcity when they did an open house for people in the industry. And I was like, there’s an Mcity here, what if we could do a party there?

I contacted Mcity. And I was like, “Hey, look, can we rent your facility on a Sunday?” I told my husband about my



Special guests discuss one of the films at Michigan Theater during Cinetopia, southeast Michigan’s major film festival. Photo: Ashkan Kazemi

idea and he told me they are booked out months in advance because it’s the only place where any company can test their autonomous vehicles and it’s not open to the public. And I was like, but it’s a Sunday, it should be okay, right? So, I contacted them. And I remember a few phone calls where they asked me: “Wait, what do you want to do here?” And I would answer: “Have a block party?” We finally visited the facility and it all came together and that was really cool.

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69	P	S	Y	O	P					70	Y	S	E	R		71	D	E	N	T

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## Rhubarb-buttermilk coffee cake

by Elizabeth Bauman  
Groundcover Contributor

### Ingredients

2 cups rhubarb, diced  
1/4 cup sugar  
1/2 cup butter, softened  
2/3 cup brown sugar  
2 eggs  
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla  
1 1/2 cups flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon baking soda  
3/4 cup buttermilk

### Directions

Combine rhubarb and sugar and set aside. Cream butter and sugar, then add eggs one at a time. Stir in the vanilla. Combine dry ingredients in a bowl, then add to creamed mixture alternating with the buttermilk. Beat well after each addition. Fold in rhubarb.

Pour into a greased nine-inch baking pan. Combine 2 tablespoons brown sugar and 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon; sprinkle over batter. Bake at 350°F for 25-30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

Serve warm.



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## Ramadan

continued from page 10

imams and spiritual leaders to preach “mohammedanism” to his church.

Our research showed the observance of Ramadan in America traces as far back as the 1500s. It is estimated that 10 to 20 percent of African slaves brought to America were Muslim, though their owners insisted on conversion to Christianity.

In Michigan, Yemenis immigrated to the United States in the 1860s and

1890s. They became U.S. citizens and fought in the world wars. They were followed closely by Lebanese, who came to work for Ford in 1914. Syrians, Palestinians and others joined the community later. Journalist Bill Shea, in his June 2014 article titled, “Built by Immigrants: Foreign-born Workers Integral Part of Detroit’s History and Economy,” said Muslims helped transform southeast Michigan into a manufacturing giant ([Craindetroit.com](http://Craindetroit.com)). Ramadan has thrived in this region for about 150 years.

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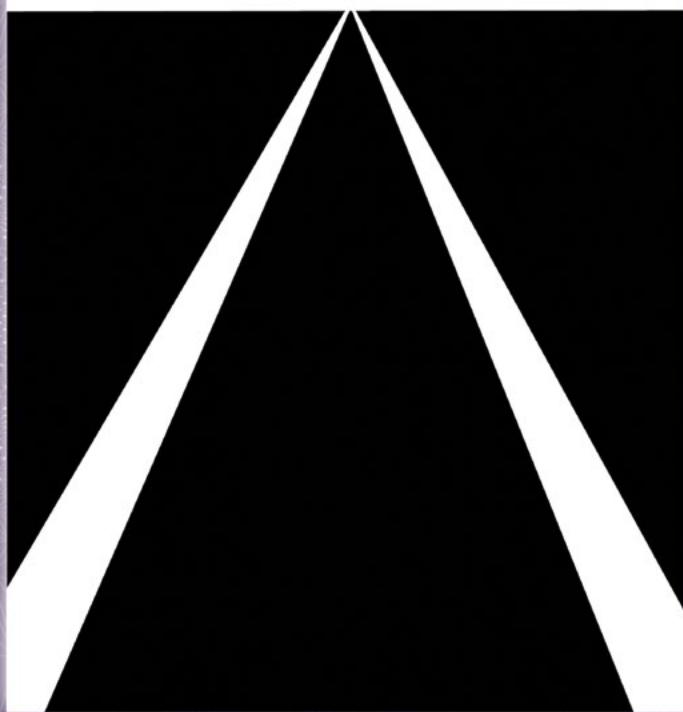
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### Upcoming book

by Kevin Spangler  
and Ariel Magidson

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